

We in Washington County are appreciative of the opportunity to participate in the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment program, which gives local communities a short-term economic boost while providing long-lasting benefits. Also, during these tight economic times, some funds will be used to fill gaps left by state revenue reductions.

At the same time, we as county board members are aware that spending decisions today's can obligate the county to more spending in the future. With that in mind, county officials have formally resolved to commit stimulus funds to innovative or practical investments in the future. For example, funds will be used to retrofit county buildings, which will increase energy efficiency in those buildings well into the future, while immediately creating local jobs. At the same time, the county's Workforce Center is right now investing funds to help those seeking work enhance their skills and promote job-seeking efforts.

Each application for and acceptance of stimulus funds is being carefully scrutinized to assure that their expenditure mesh with the county's long-term expenditure goals and its good financial health, without obligating it to costly programs in the future.

Stimulus money being put to work in the county includes:

- The replacement of an elevator in a 50-unit affordable senior apartment building in Stillwater;
- Replacing a roof and siding on a 40-unit affordable family apartment building in Stillwater;
- Fixing three units of housing for people with mental illnesses, including kitchen and bath upgrades and energy-saving improvements;
- Upgrading the energy efficiency of 56 scattered-site public housing units.

- Enough funding to pay for three years for the replacement of a canine unit in the Sheriff's Office, which had been cut in budget reductions.
- Construction of the County Road 83 overpass in Forest Lake, along with a number of transportation projects that will be paid for with money funding the state transportation program.

The county's Workforce Center has already received more than \$960,000 that is currently being used to enhance residents' workforce skills and help get them back into the workforce. In addition, the county hopes to use \$650,000 to retrofit county buildings to make them more energy-efficient well into the future.

Looking forward, Washington County supports MnDOT's application, for what is known as the TIGER grant, for \$300 million to fund a new St. Croix River crossing, and funds to support the high-speed rail project that will link St. Paul and Chicago, as well as money to retrofit the Union Depot in St. Paul.